

Challenge Papers

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment
Center

THROUGH : Associate Director-Management, NFAC

SUBJECT : Imagery Support to Interdisciplinary Analysis

1. The recent proposal by Maurice Ernst to create a petroleum analysis center in OER has focused my thinking on the question of how the Office of Imagery Analysis can best be integrated into NFAC efforts at interdisciplinary analysis. One thing is clear--this question is inseparable from the larger issue of how NFAC can most effectively use the major analytical assets that exist in the talents and expertise of OIA. When the issue is considered in this broader context, I believe--for reasons that I will try to explain below--that the interests of NFAC will be best served by having the imagery ingredient of interdisciplinary analysis provided by OIA analysts operating from [redacted] rather than moving them to other locations.

25X1

25X1

2. My major concern about moving our analysts out of [redacted] involves an issue that is fundamental to the effective management of OIA. Some background probably is required to make my concern understandable. I arrived in OIA about 18 months ago and soon came to the conclusion that the potential contribution of the Office to NFAC intelligence production programs was far greater than the actual contribution. The reasons for the shortfall were many and complex, but could be summed up by two closely related factors--morale and communications. Although there was great pride in the quality of the Office's analytic capabilities, the lack of effective and constructive communication at both the working and management levels between OIA and other NFAC components created a general uncertainty about what kind of work the Office was supposed to be doing and why. That is, there was no generally understood purpose or organizational identity to provide the kind of motivation that people need to work most effectively. The communications gap also contributed to a general sense of being unappreciated.

3. You and other senior NFAC managers have given us a great deal of help over the past 18 months in establishing an organizational purpose and identity that people find professionally satisfying. I think that OIA people are now convinced that their main purpose in life is not to look over the shoulders of their NPIC colleagues in hopes of finding mistakes, but rather to perform the much more positive task of using their skills to ensure that imagery is making as much of a con-

MORI/CDE

SUBJECT: Imagery Support to Interdisciplinary Analysis

tribution as it can possibly make to the solution of the most important intelligence problems facing NFAC. Making things actually work and giving the message lasting credibility, however, requires more than just the right words--it is essential that the words be accompanied with concrete actions that result in more meaningful substantive communications with other NFAC analysts. Things have to happen to convince people that they really are part of the action and have an important role to play. Some of the obvious things that would contribute to this end we can't do much about--like move the Office to Langley. But, we have done some things that I think have had a positive effect. For example, we have been working with [redacted] to modify the exploitation requirements system in a way that should stimulate more communication, and we have developed and given a series of 3 day imagery orientation courses for analysts in OER, OSR, OSI and OWI. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go.

25X1

4. It is against the background of this kind of management problem and challenge that I must assess Maurice's proposal to organizationally and physically relocate imagery analysts for the petroleum analysis problem, and conclude that it would be counterproductive. On the one hand, it could convey the message to my people that when an intelligence problem is really important and it requires an imagery input, OIA can't be trusted to do the job right--the imagery analyst must be put under the immediate control of another organization. On the other hand, it squanders an important opportunity to establish precisely the kind of interoffice communications that we need to work most effectively.

5. There are some intelligence problems where the need for a high quality imagery input is very clear and these problems therefore force the kind of communication we need. There are many more intelligence problems where an imagery input could be just as important, but where the need for such an input is nowhere near as clearly perceived. I am convinced that it is essential for us to exploit these problems where the headquarters analysts must come to the imagery analyst to establish general patterns of doing business. I have seen a recent example of this spillover effect in the directed energy analysis effort and know that it works very effectively. (Before we got directly involved in the interdisciplinary effort with OWI and OSI there was a great deal of resentment by my people and a great deal of dissatisfaction with our work on the part of OSI and OWI analysts. A year ago you and I were both getting complaints from OSI and OWI. The situation now is almost completely turned around because people are really talking to each other about a broad range of analytical problems to be solved in addition to the directed energy problem.)

SUBJECT: Imagery Support to Interdisciplinary Analysis

25X1

6. The second major argument against moving analysts out of [redacted] is that it simply isn't necessary to achieve the desired objectives. Presumably, there are two major objectives of bringing together analysts from the various disciplines. First, it facilitates the kind of substantive exchange and communication necessary to solve the intelligence problem at issue, and, second, it ensures control of the resources.

7. As I argued above, in order to work most effectively, we need the kind of substantive communication that is achieved by co-location of analysts for all of our analytical effort. A respectable case probably could be made that it would be better if all our analysts could be co-located with their colleagues in headquarters, but we simply can't do that so we have got to identify and develop methods for strengthening communications between the organizations as they exist. With regard to the resource control issue, I would point out that, unlike the other production offices in NFAC, OIA has no important constituency other than NFAC components. Our analytical effort is dedicated almost exclusively to NFAC--that is why OIA was created. There is no need to move people in order to guarantee that the resources will be available as needed for important interdisciplinary analysis.

8. There are several current examples which demonstrate that OIA can participate in interdisciplinary analytic efforts very effectively without moving people out of the building. The three most important are: the RDT&E resources effort (a group where the analysts all have been co-located except for the imagery analysts); the directed energy effort (none of the analysts have moved from their home offices); and the civil defense effort (an organizational modality somewhere in between the other two). Please note that for all three efforts, imagery plays a significant role.

9. The final argument I would make is that scattering imagery analysis around NFAC is likely to be an expensive way of doing business. There are indications that we have already gone farther in this direction than makes sense. We were recently asked by OGCR for help in developing a mensuration capability needed for the narcotics analysis effort. Specifically, we were asked to provide some older comparators that have been surplused. We had planned to give these comparators to service imagery organizations. I understand that OGCR is also negotiating with NPIC for use of a Mann comparator and for the provision of hard wire access to the NPIC computer. Frankly, I don't think this makes much sense. Is it really efficient or necessary to create an independent mensuration capability in OGCR? If the imagery analysis being conducted in OGCR is sophisticated enough to require comparators and NPIC computer support, then it probably should be conducted in [redacted] at Ames.

25X1

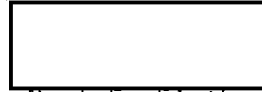
25X1

Approved For Release 2006/10/02 : CIA-RDP84T00316R000100090031-5

SUBJECT: Imagery Support to Interdisciplinary Analysis

10. This has been a long memorandum. I apologize for that, but think that importance of the issue justifies its length. I feel strongly about this and would be remiss if I did not articulate my views.

25X1



Noel E. Firth
Director
Imagery Analysis

Distribution:

Original - Addressee
1 - NFAC/OGCR
1 - NFAC/OER
1 - NFAC/OIA

Extra copies to:

D/NPIC
C/IEG/NPIC
D/ORD